

# Why Use Blackboard?

<http://www.nhctc.blackboard.com>

## 1) Enhances student-to-student and faculty-to-student communication

Researchers have found that adding online discussion boards, chat and email to a course increases student motivation and participation in class discussions and projects.

## 2) Exposes students to different perspectives

Online discussion boards or chat sessions enable students to view other student's answers and learn through the exposure to many different perspectives.

## 3) Allows a student to experience a sense of equality

Each student has the same opportunity to "speak up" by posting messages without concern for seating arrangements, volume of student voices, and gender biases.

Shy and anxious students may feel more comfortable expressing ideas when posting online instead of speaking in a lecture room.

Studies prove that online discussions provoke more confrontational and direct communication between students.

## 4) Enables Instructor to be more accessible

Online communication provides an additional layer of Instructor accessibility.

Students no longer have to worry if they cannot make an Instructor's regular office hours, as they still have the ability to submit inquiries via email at any time.

## 5) Enables student-centered teaching approaches

Every student has a unique learning style. Some students are visual learners; some learn better when they "learn by doing."

Web-based learning environments permit the Instructor to build one course, yet implement a variety of resources, so students can utilize materials in whichever way works best for them.

Instructors can post various documents for students, including handouts, articles, audio clips, java applets, pictures, reserved readings, and lecture notes to allow students to access and review content at a self-determined pace.

6) Accommodates different learning styles

An Instructor can present materials in many formats to accommodate different types of learning styles.

For example, if an Instructor puts both lecture notes and slides online, both visual and auditory learners benefit.

Students who prefer to focus on "listening" and "watching" during lecture do not have to worry that they are missing important concepts while scrambling to take copious notes. They can focus on understanding the material and concepts as they are presented.

7) Provides opportunities for exploration

Easy access to relevant web sites stored online provides content reinforcement and allows students to see how course concepts are used in "real world" situations.

8) Encourages additional rehearsal time

When Instructors post online discussion questions or short essay assignments, students reflect on the subject matter before responding. Reflection and writing about what they have learned engages students in an active learning experience.

9) Provides 24 hour/7 day per week accessibility to course materials

Some students work best in the morning, some in the evening. Some students commute to campus and others take night classes. Scheduling time for homework and group projects can be difficult depending on each student's course, job, and personal responsibilities. Online course content easily overcomes the problems of time, distance and coordination of schedules.

10) Allows continual access to materials

Students can complete assignments during their most productive times. Continual access to course documents also ensures students can obtain materials at any time, removing frustrations such as "The library was closed," "All the copies of reserve readings were checked out," or "I missed that handout during your lecture."

11) Removes reliance on physical attendance

When web-based collaborative tools are available, coordination is no longer an issue. Students can work in groups without the constraints of meeting together at a certain date, time, and location.

12) Provides just-in-time methods to assess and evaluate student progress

Learner assessments (tests and surveys) enable the Instructor to constantly evaluate his or her teaching effectiveness. Online assessments can also constantly evaluate student progress with rapid feedback to the student. Also, continuous access to grades allows the student to continuously know how he/she is doing in the course.

13) Adds pedagogical benefits

Frequent assessment provides concept reinforcement and increases student motivation to stay caught up with the work.

Instructors can post practice exams and end-of-chapter reviews without worrying about finding the time and resources to analyze results. Students can easily access the online assessments.

Computerized grading allows immediate student feedback and eliminates the tedious task of grading tests.

Online assessments may also help students who suffer from test anxiety relax and minimize embarrassment for those that do poorly.

14) Reduces the amount of faculty time spent on "administrivia"

Students can save and print items as needed when provided with handouts and readings online.

The direct result is a reduced institutional expense for both the cost and time associated with copying, collating, and distributing these materials.

Instructors can easily e-mail students or use the Announcements feature to communicate with the entire class.

15) Uses time efficiently

The time saving elements introduced by web-based education tools apply to both the Instructor and the student.

Students benefit by having immediate access to course materials.

Instructors can minimize time spent in office hours, photocopying, looking for extra copies of the syllabus, agendas, articles, etc., and address student concerns online instead.

16) Maximizes the classroom experience

Instructors no longer have to spend valuable classroom time dealing with "administrivia." The 15 minutes at the start of each class typically spent distributing handouts, collecting assignments, and making announcements

can be utilized for teaching since administrative tasks are managed with online tools.

17) Reduces faculty workload

When the Quiz/Survey tools are used to deliver tests, all the grading and analysis is automated. Time previously spent correcting, and grading can be used for other things. Student records can be exported directly into spreadsheets for turnover to the registrar.